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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005993

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: PRO-KURDISH PARTY CHAIRMAN AND OTHERS DETAINED IN  
TURKEY AFTER CONCERT IN GERMANY

REF: A. ANKARA 2998

[1](#)B. ANKARA 3266

(U) Classified by Political Counselor John Kunstadter, E.O.  
12958, reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Turkish police detained pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) Chairman Tuncer Bakirhan and several others September 22 in connection with their attendance at a concert in Germany on September 13 where PKK flags and posters of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan were allegedly displayed. Justice Minister and AK government spokesman Cemil Cicek publicly and immediately criticized the detentions as inconsistent with Turkey's recent democratic reforms. The detentions, and Cicek's criticism, reflect the split between Turkey's elected AK government and those in the security apparatus and judiciary who continue to resist democratic reform. Bakirhan will probably be released soon. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) DEHAP Vice Chairman Nazmi Gur told us September 23 that Turkish police detained Bakirhan September 22 when he presented himself voluntarily at a police station. Bakirhan had heard that a state security court prosecutor had opened an investigation regarding his attendance at a September 13 concert in Germany and presented himself to the prosecutor for questioning. The prosecutor told Bakirhan to go to police instead. Gur said this was an attempt to intimidate DEHAP. Police also detained several others, including a singer, two guitarists, and the Chairman of the small Freedom and Society Party, which has been set up as a successor to DEHAP in the event DEHAP is closed.

[1](#)3. (U) A State Security Court prosecutor released the musicians on the afternoon of September 23 but ordered the party chairmen detained pending an appearance in Ankara State Security Court. Gur said no charges had been issued yet but speculated that possible charges could include PKK membership or aiding and abetting the PKK. Media accounts of the concert claim the detentions stem from the display of PKK flags and posters of Abdullah Ocalan at an annual Kurdish Festival Concert September 13 in Gelsenkirchen, Germany.

[1](#)4. (U) Justice Minister and AK government spokesman Cemil Cicek immediately and publicly criticized the detentions as inconsistent with Turkey's recent democratic reforms. "It is more important to apply these laws than to pass them," he said, adding "we did not pass these laws in order to decorate the shelf. Our judges and prosecutors must not violate rights when applying the law."

[1](#)5. (C) Human Rights Association (HRA) Chairman Husnu Ondul told Embassy poloff September 23 that the timing of the detentions was a deliberate attempt to derail Turkey's EU membership by those opposed to democratic reform. Ondul claimed that the prosecutor who opened this investigation, Cengiz Koksall, was also behind the raids against the HRA in May (reftels).

[1](#)6. (C) Comment: We expect Bakirhan will be released soon and that if charges are issued, the case will drag on indefinitely. Like the May raids against the HRA, this detention points up the stubborn resistance to democratic reform by elements of Turkey's security establishment and judiciary. End Comment.  
EDELMAN